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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this document is to report on the implementation of the provisions of House Bill 739 and Senate Bill 1161. The provisions of the legislation are consistent with the strategic directions adopted by the University of North Carolina Board of Governors and the State Board of the North Carolina Community College System. The two boards approved a "Proposed Plan to Further Simplify and Facilitate Transfer of Credit Between Institutions." The report lays out the requisites for transfer in the following areas: (1) transfer of general education core course for non graduates; (2) transfer agreements for major or professional specialty course; (3) transfer of associate in fine arts degree course credits; (4) transfer of associate in applied science degree course credit; and (5) transfer of course not originated at NC community colleges. The report also discusses the transfer information system created by the Transfer Information System sub-committee. The committee's role is to determine the status of the appropriate technologies to facilitate the electronic transfer of information, academic records, and admissions applications between NC community colleges and UNC institutions. The committee is currently focusing on email network accessibility for transfer counselors and students, online catalogues, and computerized common transfer application, which can be transmitted electronically. (MZ)

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ED 482 610

COMPREHENSIVE ARTICULATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AND THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

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(This document, complete with appendices, is available at
www.ga.unc.edu/student_info/caa)

Comprehensive Articulation Agreement
Between the University of North Carolina
and the North Carolina Community College System

I. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to report on the implementation of the provisions of House Bill 739 and Senate Bill 1161 (1995 Session of the General Assembly). Section 1 of HB739 instructed the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the State Board of Community Colleges to develop a plan for the transfer of credits between the institutions of the North Carolina Community College System and between them and the University of North Carolina. Section 3 of HB739 instructed the State Board of Community Colleges to implement common course descriptions for all community college programs by June 1, 1997. Section 1 of SB1161 directed the University of North Carolina Board of Governors and the State Board of Community Colleges to develop a plan that ensures accurate and accessible academic counseling for students considering transfer between community colleges and between community colleges and the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina. Section 2 of SB1161 required the two boards to establish a timetable for the development of guidelines and transfer agreements for program majors, professional specialization, and associate in applied science degrees. Section 3 of SB1161 directed the State Board of Community Colleges to review its policies and rules and make any changes that are necessary to implement the plan for the transfer of credits.

The provisions of the legislation are consistent with the strategic directions adopted by the University of North Carolina Board of Governors, the first of which is to "expand access to higher education for both traditional and non-traditional students through...uniform policies for the transfer of credit from community colleges to constituent institutions...development of electronic information systems on transfer policies, off-campus instruction, and distance education...[and] increased collaboration with other education sectors...." Similarly, the State Board of Community Colleges has established the education continuum as one of seven critical success factors used to measure the performance of programs consistent with the work force development mission of the North Carolina Community College System. College level academic courses and programs have been a part of the mission and programming of the North Carolina Community College System from its inception in 1963.

The Board of Governors and the State Board of Community Colleges are committed to simplifying further the transfer of credits for students and thus facilitating their educational progress as they pursue associate or baccalaureate degrees within and among public post-secondary institutions in North Carolina.

II. Background and Procedures

The two boards approved a "Proposed Plan to Further Simplify and Facilitate Transfer of Credit Between Institutions" at their meetings in February 1996. This plan was submitted as a preliminary report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee in March 1996. Since that time, significant steps have been taken toward implementation of the transfer plan. At their April 1996 meetings, the boards appointed their respective sector representatives to the Transfer Advisory Committee to direct, coordinate, and monitor the implementation of the proposed transfer plan. (The Transfer Advisory Committee membership is listed in Appendix.)

Basic to the work of the Transfer Advisory Committee in refining transfer policies and implementing the transfer plan has been the re-engineering project accomplished by the North Carolina Community College System, especially common course names, numbers, credits, and descriptions. The Community College Common Course Library includes approximately 3,800 semester-credit courses written for the associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs offered in the system. Colleges select courses from the Common Course Library to design all curriculum programs.

Of approximately 700 arts and sciences courses within the Common Course Library, the faculty and administrators of the community colleges recommended approximately 170 courses as appropriate for the general education transfer core. The Transfer Advisory Committee then convened a meeting on May 28, 1996, at which six University of North Carolina faculty in each of ten general education discipline areas met with six of their professional counterparts from the community colleges. Through a very useful and collegial dialog, these committees were able to reach consensus on which community college courses in each discipline were acceptable for transfer to University of North Carolina institutions as a part of the general education core. This list of courses was distributed to all University of North Carolina and community college institutions for their review and comments. Considering the recommendations of the general education discipline committees and the comments from the campuses, the Transfer Advisory Committee established the list of courses which constitutes the general education transfer core. This general education core, if completed successfully by a community college student, is portable and transferable as a block across the community college system and to all University of North Carolina institutions.

With the establishment of the general education transfer core as a foundation, joint academic disciplinary committees were appointed to draw up guidelines for community college curricula that will prepare students for intended majors at University of North Carolina institutions. Each committee consisted of representatives from each UNC institution offering such major programs and eight to ten representatives from community colleges. The Transfer Advisory Committee distributed the pre-major agreements recommended by the faculty committees to all University of North Carolina and community college institutions for their review and comments. Considering the faculty committee recommendations and the campus comments, the Transfer Advisory Committee established transfer articulation agreements for majors which have significant transfer traffic from the community colleges to University of North Carolina institutions.

The special circumstances surrounding transfer agreements for associate in applied science programs, which are not designed for transfer, require bilateral rather than statewide articulation. Special circumstances include the different accreditation criteria for faculty in transfer and non-transfer programs, the different general education requirements for transfer and non-transfer programs, and the workforce preparedness mission of the technical/community college AAS programs.

A major element in the proposed transfer plan adopted by the two boards in February 1996 is the transfer information system. Simultaneously with the work being done on the general education and professional specialization (major) components of the transfer curriculum, the joint committee on the transfer information system laid out a plan, approved by the boards of the University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Community College System, "to provide students with accurate and understandable information regarding the transfer of credits...[and] to increase the adequacy and availability of academic counseling for students who are considering a college transfer program." In addition to the printed publications currently being distributed to students, transfer counselors, admissions directors, and others, an electronic information network provides (1) electronic access to the articulation database which will include current transfer policies, guidelines, and on-line catalogs for public post-secondary institutions; (2) computerized common application forms, which can be completed and transmitted electronically along with transcripts and other education records; and (3) an electronic mail network for transfer counselors and prospective transfer students. Access to the e-mail network is available in the transfer counselors' offices and other selected sites on campuses.

The final element of the transfer information system is the Transfer Student Academic Performance Report. This report, recently refined with suggestions from community college administrators, is sent annually to each community college and to the State Board of Community Colleges. These data permit the rational analysis of transfer issues and are beneficial to students and to educational and governmental decision-makers. This performance report provides the important assessment component necessary for evaluating and improving the transfer process.

III. Comprehensive Articulation Agreement

The Comprehensive Articulation Agreement between the University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Community College System rests upon several assumptions common to successful statewide comprehensive articulation agreements. The primary assumption is that institutions recognize the professional integrity of other public post-secondary institutions, which are regionally accredited for college transfer programs. All courses designated as approved for college transfer under this agreement will be taught by faculty who meet Southern
Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges credential requirements. A secondary assumption is that there is sufficient commonality in the

lower-division general education requirements currently offered among all universities to develop a common general education component at the community colleges for the purpose of transfer. The general education transfer core is similar to each institution's lower-division general education requirements, but is not identical in that specific courses may differ. The underlying concept is that competencies and understandings developed by general education programs as a whole are more important than individual courses. Therefore, the block transfer of a core is important. The general education requirements of the receiving institutions remain in effect for all students not participating in this comprehensive articulation agreement; any upper-division general education requirements and graduation requirements remain unaffected by this plan. Institution-wide, lower-division general education requirements serve as the starting point for determining specific general education courses in each baccalaureate major. The specific lower level courses required for each major are the subject of the pre-major transfer articulation agreements developed by joint discipline committees.

The Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) addresses the transfer of credits between institutions in the North Carolina Community College System and from that system to constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina. It does not address admission to an institution nor to a specific major within an institution. The CAA was developed jointly by faculty and administrators of the North Carolina Community College System and the University of North Carolina based on the proposed transfer plan approved by both governing boards in February 1996. The CAA applies to all North Carolina community colleges and all constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina. The components described below are included in the CAA.

Transfer of graduates of associate in arts and associate in science degree programs in the community college system

- The CAA enables North Carolina community college graduates of two-year associate in arts and associate in science degree programs who are admitted to constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina to transfer with junior status
- Universities cannot place requirements on students transferring under the CAA which are not required of their native students
- The Comprehensive Articulation Agreement does not obviate existing requirements for the University of North Carolina Minimum Course Requirements; however, completion of the AA or AS degree from the NCCCS satisfies Minimum Course Requirements. In 2004, students under the CAA must have completed two semesters of a foreign language in addition to AA or AS to meet the minimum course requirements.
- Community college graduates of associate in arts and associate in science degree programs who have completed the general education transfer core (outlined below) will be considered to have fulfilled the institution-wide, lower division general education requirements of the receiving institution.

- To be eligible for inclusion in this policy, a student must have an overall GPA of at least a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale and a grade of "C" or better in all CAA courses.
- Community college graduates of these programs who have earned 64 semester hours in approved transfer courses with a grade of "C" or better and an overall GPA of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale will receive at least 64 semester hours of academic credit upon admission to a university. Under special circumstances, a university may choose to accept additional credit hours.
- The CAA does not guarantee admission to a university; admission to a university does not constitute admission to a professional school or a specific program.
- Requirements for admission to some major programs may require additional pre-specialty courses beyond the general education transfer core courses taken at the community college. Students entering such programs may need more than two academic years of course work to complete the baccalaureate degree, depending on requirements of the program.
- All courses approved for transfer in the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement are designated as fulfilling general education (see Appendix B), pre-major or elective (see Appendix E) requirements. While general education and pre-major courses may also be used as electives, elective courses may not be used to fulfill general education requirements.

General education transfer core (44 semester hours credit)

The associate in arts and associate in science degree programs in the NC Community College System require a total of 64-65 semester hours credit for graduation. (See Appendix C.)

Within the overall total, the community college system and the university have developed a general education core transfer component. This curriculum reflects the distribution of discipline areas commonly included in institution-wide, lower division general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree. The general education transfer core includes study in the areas of humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences and mathematics, and English composition. Within the core, community colleges must include opportunities for the achievement of competence in reading, writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematical skills, and the basic use of computers (SACS Criteria 4.2.2). Students must meet the receiving university's foreign language and/or health and physical education requirements, if applicable, prior to or after transfer to the senior institution. The semester hours credit (SHC) distribution of the general education core by area is as follows:

English Composition (6 Semester Hours Credit)

Humanities/Fine Arts (12 Semester Hours Credit)
Four courses are to be selected from at least three of the following discipline areas: music, art, drama, dance, french, german, italian, russian, spanish, interdisciplinary humanities, literature, philosophy, and religion. At least one course must be a literature course. (3 SHC in Speech/Communication may be substituted for 3 SHC in Humanities/Fine Arts. Speech/Communication may not substitute for the literature requirement.)

Social/Behavioral Sciences (12 Semester Hours Credit)
Four courses must be selected from at least three of the following discipline areas: anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology. At least one course must be a history course.

Natural Sciences/Mathematics (14 Semester Hours Credit)
Natural Sciences (8 SHC): Two courses, including accompanying laboratory work, must be selected from among the biological and physical science disciplines.
Mathematics (6 SHC): At least one introductory mathematics course (college algebra, trigonometry, calculus, etc.) must be selected; the other unit may be selected from among other quantitative subjects, such as computer science and statistics.
The specific courses used to fulfill the requirement in each of these areas will be identified by each community college as meeting its own general education requirements. The courses will be drawn from those courses designated in the NC Community College Common Course Library as being appropriate as part of a general education core transfer curriculum. This will preserve the autonomy of each community college to develop its own general education program, including those aspects that make its program unique.

The general education core transfer component, if completed successfully by a student with a grade of "C" or better in each course, shall be portable and transferable as a block across the NC Community College System and from that system to UNC institutions, whether or not the transferring student has earned the associate degree.

Transfer of general education core courses for non-graduates

Upon admission to another public two-year institution or to a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, students who have completed the general education core with the proper distribution of hours, but who have not completed the associate degree, will be considered to have fulfilled the institution-wide, lower-division general education requirements of the receiving institution. To be eligible for inclusion in this policy, a student must have an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale at the time of transfer and a grade of "C" or better in all core courses. Upon transfer at the sophomore level, a non-graduate who has completed the general education core should be advised at the University to take pre-major or cognate courses based on his or her chosen major.

The transcripts of students who transfer before completing the general education core will be evaluated on a course-by-course basis by the receiving universities. The transferring

student who has not completed the core must meet the receiving institution's general education requirement.

Guidelines and transfer agreements for major or professional specialty courses

Beyond the general education courses offered as the transfer core component, a program of study leading to the associate degree contains courses related to a student's major or program emphasis. Joint academic disciplinary committees developed system-wide guidelines for community college curricula that will prepare students for intended majors or professional specializations at the baccalaureate level. Statewide pre-major articulation agreements for AA and AS degree programs have been developed for specific major fields (See Appendix C).
Statewide pre-major articulation agreements for AFA degree programs have been developed for specific major fields. If a pre-major articulation agreement requires or recommends 64-65 SHC, then it becomes incumbent upon the community college to make appropriate adjustments in its local graduation requirements.

Transfer of associate in fine arts degree course credits

Upon admission to another public two-year institution or to a public university, a community college student who was enrolled in an associate in fine arts degree program and who satisfactorily completed with a grade of "C" or better all courses that are designated for college transfer (general education, elective, or pre-major) will receive credit for those courses. The receiving institution will determine whether the course will count as general education, major, or elective credit. Because the AFA curriculum standard includes only 28 SHC for general education (See Appendix F), AFA students who transfer must meet the general education requirements of the receiving institution. Pre-major agreements for AFA degrees are presented in Appendix D.

Transfer of associate in applied science degree course credit

Upon admission to another public two-year institution or to a public university, a community college student who was enrolled in an associate in applied science degree program and who satisfactorily completed with a grade of "C" or better all courses that are designated for college transfer (general education, elective, or pre-major) will receive credit for those courses.

Articulation of associate in applied science (AAS) degree programs will be handled on a bilateral articulation agreement basis rather than on a statewide basis. Under bilateral agreements, individual universities and one or more community colleges may join in a collaborative effort to facilitate the transfer of students from AAS degree programs to baccalaureate degree programs. The Transfer Advisory Committee will maintain a current inventory of bilateral articulation agreements for AAS degree programs. These agreements will serve as models to encourage the development of new articulation agreements among institutions.

Transfer of courses not originated at NC community colleges

Courses which do not originate at the community college and which are not listed on the approved college transfer course lists will be evaluated on an individual basis by the receiving university. Transfer credit may or may not be granted for these courses, according to the policies of the receiving institution. Transfer credit for courses that originate at a UNC institution or independent college or university that is part of the CAA are acceptable as part of a student's successfully completed 44 semester hour general education core under the CAA.

Advanced Placement course credits, awarded for a score of 3 or higher, are acceptable as part of a student's successfully completed 44 semester hour general education core under the CAA. Students who receive AP course credit at a community college but do not complete the general education core will have AP credit awarded on the basis of the receiving institution's AP policy.

All College Level Examination Program (CLEP) credit will be evaluated on the basis of the receiving institution's policy.

Impact of the CAA on articulation agreements in effect prior to Fall 1997

Effective Fall 1997, the North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) took precedence over bilateral articulation agreements established between constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Community College System but does not necessarily preclude such agreements. Institution-to-institution articulation agreements which fall within the parameters of the CAA and enhance transferability of students from community colleges to senior institutions are encouraged. Institutional articulation agreements conflicting with the CAA are not permitted.

Impact of the CAA on students in the transitional period

Students who enrolled in community college associate in arts or associate in science degree programs in Fall 1997 entered under the CAA. Students who were enrolled prior to Fall 1997 took the individual college's courses, which were on course equivalency lists agreed upon by a university and the college or which were approved for transfer in an existing articulation agreement. Existing institutional articulation agreements may remain in effect until Fall 1999. Or, the student's transcript can be evaluated on a course equivalency basis, except for those courses which the student took during or after Fall 1997 and which are approved for transfer under the CAA; any course the student has taken which is approved for transfer will be guaranteed to transfer if the student is admitted to a University of North Carolina institution.

CAA Amendment and Appeals Process Questions about the transferability of course work under the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) or any proposed changes to CAA policies, the general education core, or pre-major articulation agreements must

be addressed by the Transfer Advisory Committee. Changes to curriculum standards for the associate in arts, associate in science, and the associate in fine arts degree programs require the approval of the governing boards of both systems.
Because articulation between the North Carolina Community College System and the University of North Carolina is a dynamic process, occasional modifications to the CAA may be necessary. These modifications may include the addition, deletion, and modification of courses on the transfer list, addition and revision of pre-major articulation agreements, and changes in designation as general education core or electives. The TAC will receive requests for modification only upon the recommendation of the chief academic officer of the NCCCS or the UNC. Additions, deletions, and modifications may be subject to faculty review under the direction of the Transfer Advisory Committee. Because the modification process involves faculty and administrative review, this process may require up to 12 months for final action.

Course work detailed under the CAA general education core curriculum or under approved pre-major agreements as well as approved electives will be accepted as agreed upon. Questions arising over the use of electives in meeting institution-specific graduation requirements may be appealed to the chief academic officer of the receiving institution.

Authority to interpret CAA policy rests with the Transfer Advisory Committee. Questions concerning CAA policy interpretations should be directed to the appropriate system's chief academic officer with an explanation of the institutional policy which may (appear to) be in conflict with CAA policy. Unresolved questions will be forwarded by the chief academic officer to the Transfer Advisory Committee for interpretation.

IV. Transfer Information System

A Transfer Information System sub-committee was established by the co-chairs of the Transfer Advisory Committee to determine the status of the appropriate technologies to facilitate the electronic transfer of information, academic records, and admissions applications between NC community colleges and UNC institutions and to recommend a timeline and appropriate resources needed to ensure a fully operational system to facilitate the transfer of students between and among the two systems. The following items are in priority order.

E-mail network accessible to transfer counselors and students

All UNC and community college campuses currently have Internet connectivity and e-mail capability. The sub-committee recommends that all campuses begin publishing the appropriate admissions/college transfer coordinator e-mail address in all admissions and recruitment information. The Joint Committee on College Transfer will also include e-mail addresses in the annually updated transfer counselor network, which identifies a transfer contact on each UNC and community college campus. The UNC General Administration and the North Carolina Community College System central office will ensure full participation by all campuses.

Computerized articulation database including current transfer policies and guidelines

The current "Policies of Senior Colleges and Universities Concerning Transfer Students From Two-Year Colleges in North Carolina" is available on the World Wide Web as well as widely distributed in hard copy. The information is updated annually. The comprehensive transfer articulation agreement between the NC Community College System and the University of North Carolina, including the pre-major agreements, general education and elective course lists, and basic transfer policies, is on the web site at http://www.ga.unc.edu/student_info/caa/. In addition, thousands of copies of the printed brochure, College Transfer Guide for Students, have been distributed.

On-line catalogs for public post secondary institutions

UNC and community college catalogs are available on the Internet. The existing UNC and NC Community College System World Wide Web sites are linked to allow interested individuals to access information between the two systems quickly and easily.

Transfer Student Academic Performance Report

The community college transfer student performance report has been produced for several years and circulated widely between and among the UNC campuses and the community colleges. This useful tool has been revised to include comparative data with UNC campuses' native students. This information is also on the UNC World Wide Web home page and linked to the NC Community College System home page.

Computerized common transfer applications which can be transmitted electronically

Common admissions applications have been developed for UNC and NCCCS institutions and are available on the World Wide Web at their respective web sites.

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